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ABSTRACT

"Blue-ribbon" commissions are an increasingly common feature of the American political landscape. This book examines the roles that blue-ribbon commissions and their reports have played in educational policymaking. The book begins with a foreword by Paul E. Peterson and an introductory chapter, "Commissions and Change" by Rick Ginsberg and David N. Plank. Part 2 contains chapters by authors, policymakers, and practitioners: (2) "A Nation at Risk: Ugly Duckling No Longer" (Milton Goldberg and Anita Madan Renton); (3) "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century: The Report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession" (Marc Tucker); (4) "Committee for Economic Development: Shaping Policies and Partnerships for America's Children" (Laurie Miller McNeill and Sandra Kessler Hamburg); (5) "Impact of Commission Reports in the South and on South Carolina's Comprehensive School Reform Efforts of the 1980s" (Richard W. Riley and Terry K. Peterson); and (6) "Using Task Forces in Local Educational Agencies to Develop Educational Policy" (Richard C. Wallace, Jr., Patricia Crawford, and Mary Ellen Kirby). The third part includes analyses of several commission reports: (7) "The Rhetoric of School Reform Reports: Sacred, Skeptical, and Cynical Interpretations" (Noreen B. Garman and Patricia C. Holland); (8) "Summits, Task Forces, and Commissions as Ceremonial Dance" (Terrence E. Deal); (9) "Substance and Symbolism in the Education Commission Reports" (Lars G. Bjork); and (10) "Teacher Professionalism and the Commission Reports: The Prospects for Creating a Learner-Centered Profession of Teaching" (Linda Darling-Hammond and Barnett Berry). Chapters in Part 4 focus on issues excluded from or minimally treated in commission reports: (11) "Gender and the Reports: The Case of the Missing Piece" (Lois Weis); (12) "Minorities and Educational Reform: A Question of Equity and Excellence" (Tom Thompson); (13) "Why Do Educational Reform Commissions Fail to Address Special Education?" (Michael M. Gerber and Melvyn I. Semmel); and (14) "Effective Schools...and Beyond" (Charles L. Glenn). Part 5 contains the epilogue: (15) "The Future of Reform Commissions" (Rick Ginsberg and David N. Plank). References accompany each chapter. An index is included. (LMI)